

## OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, the Interior Department is going forward with the oil and gas production lease sale in the central Gulf of Mexico. I welcome the Interior Secretary to my home State of Louisiana this March.

While visiting our great State, I would like to remind Secretary Salazar that although it is a positive gesture to move forward with this lease sale, the benefit of these leases will greatly be diminished under tax hikes—that is removal of exploratory incentives that are included in this administration's budget proposal.

This \$30 billion tax increase could devastate an industry that directly and indirectly employs over 300,000 Louisianans. This tax increase will wreak havoc on small independent producers and third-party services. It will also continue to perpetuate the cycle of high fuel prices and our addiction to foreign sources of energy who want to see our democracy fail.

In short, this proposed budget does nothing to solve our energy needs. If anything, it will lead to more cost and massive job loss for many Americans, especially in Louisiana, who are suffering in this economic recession.

## ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, we have had a change in America. We have gone from a previous President who for 8 years didn't believe in regulation and believed in tax cuts, which led us to the greatest economic crisis which we have faced in this country in 76 years, to a President who believes in regulation and believes in stimulating the economy.

There are two ways you can help get the economy moving. One is monetary policy and the other is fiscal. Right now the only way we can do it is fiscal because monetary has gone down to about zero. We have done all we can do with monetary. So the stimulus package, the Recovery Reinvestment Act, is what America needs. Some would suggest we haven't done enough. Mr. Krugman suggests that. I tend to agree with him. But the fact is we can only get three Republican votes in the Senate, one vote more than we needed for the bill in the Senate, so you get what you can get from the Senate.

I support my President because he has a policy and a program that will get us out of this recession and move America forward to being the great national and international leader that we need to be in the 21st century, and we can only do that by supporting our President with a stimulus package.

## CARD CHECK

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, there is an effort underway in Washington to take away the right of the secret ballot vote from American workers.

Colleagues on the other side of the aisle will introduce today a bill misnamed Employee Free Choice Act, also called the Card Check bill.

This is a bill that would allow for the establishment of a union not by secret ballot vote, but simply if the majority of employees at a company sign a card lending their support. This process, called "card check," opens employees up to coercion and intimidation.

The secret ballot is a fundamental principle of American democracy. If individuals want to join a union, they are entitled to that right. They can show their support with their vote. But if workers do not want to pay union dollars to be used to advance a political agenda they disagree with, they should also be afforded the same right, to cast their vote free of coercion and intimidation in a secret ballot election.

Card check is an assault on the principles of our Nation and would be a job killer during a time when we cannot afford to lose more jobs.

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## LIFTING THE BAN ON STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud President Obama's executive order lifting the ban on Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research.

I join scientists across the country, especially researchers at the University of Louisville, who are excited about the opportunities that expanded research presents.

But as we all know, there is another dimension to this issue, and it involves moral questions about the use of discarded embryos for scientific purposes. I fully respect the views of those who raise moral objections to embryonic stem cell research; their convictions are just as valid and unassailable as the scientific arguments made about the potential of stem cell research. On the other side, however, are equally valid and, to my mind, unassailable moral arguments that support President Obama's decision this week. They are analogous to the arguments made in support of organ donation and transplantation. Here, human material that has the potential to save life is not being squandered.

Like those who raise moral objections to stem cell research, I would have problems with the production of embryos for scientific purposes, but to me, the destruction of embryos that can be used to advance science in the

service of life raises similar moral problems.

I congratulate President Obama on his action.

## VETERANS PASS ACT

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Here in Washington, D.C., we are always reminded that freedom isn't free. Whether it's the self-reflective Vietnam War Memorial or the solemn Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, the freedom we Americans enjoy today was paid for by the blood and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

While our veterans have paid this price with their sacrifices, there is another price they must pay which we can now alleviate. I have introduced the Veterans Pass Act, which will provide veterans an annual National Parks and Federal Lands pass at a sharp discount of \$10, down from the normal cost of \$80. I encourage my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation.

The majestic beauty of our Nation's national parks are just as fitting a monument to the sacrifices of our soldiers as is a monument made of marble. We should make visiting these living monuments easier for our veterans. Please join me in cosponsoring the Veterans Pass Act.

## HEALTH CARE

(Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, health care reform is an essential component to our Nation's economic recovery. The expansion and reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program that was passed by this Congress and signed into law by President Obama expands health insurance to an additional 4 million children, covering 11 million children in all, including dental coverage and mental health parity.

The \$20 billion investment that we have made in health information technology in our Recovery and Reinvestment Act will modernize the health care system, saving money, reducing medical errors, improving quality, and creating health care jobs across all sectors.

The recovery package's \$87 billion in funding to the State Medicaid programs is a significant boost to our State's economy in Maryland. It is a budget gap filler for our State.

And finally, the President's budget, with an over \$630 billion down payment, prioritizes health care reform. At long last, the nearly 50 million people without health care will finally get their health care for all, quality, affordable, accessible health care for all. And I thank the President and this Congress for their leadership on health care.